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EVENING 104,457

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Not A Cent For Tribute:

Keep Public Funds Out Of This Ransom Deal

THE REPORT that American tax dollars may be used to pay a share of Castro's ransom demands for Cubans captured in the Bay of Pigs fiasco no longer can be considered just "another Washington rumor."

Jack Bell of the Associated Press writes that congressmen who have been kept advised of the progress of negotiations on the prisoner release expect emergency funds to be used.

Neither bulldozers nor tax dollars for Castro strike a chord with a nation whose creed, historically, in dealing with pirates has been "millions for defense, but not a cent for tribute."

The project ostensibly was promoted by a private organization known as the Cuban Prisoners Committee. This group retained New York Atty. James E. Donovan to negotiate with Prime Minister Castro.

Involved are 1,113 men for whom Castro has asked \$62 million. Donovan, who reportedly has been on the brink of some sort of agreement, seeks to pay the ransom—at least in part—with food and medical supplies.

But, as has been pointed out, it would be extremely difficult—if not impossible—for a private group to come up with \$62 million in either cash or food and medicine.

This factor has promoted the assumption that if negotiations with Castro are successful, the Federal Government would have to furnish both cash and supplies.

It has even been suggested that a portion of the money might come out of funds controlled by the Central Intelligence Agency, the super-secret agency which for security reasons is not required to file an item-by-item breakdown of its expenditures.

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THERE IS ALWAYS the chance when information of this sort "leaks out," someone is running up a trial balloon to attempt to determine the reaction.

In this instance again, the ransom pitch is directed at the American public, which does abhor the thought of anyone languishing in a dictator's prison; but abhors no less—note it—the national humiliation of hand-wringing surrender to a chingapin blackmailer.

If there is CIA money or contingency funds of other agencies in these amounts lying around for such purposes Congress should take another look at its appropriations. Under these or any other circumstances, it should be Congress—and neither the Executive nor an agency—which authorizes such "foreign aid."

By virtue of stated precedent, the Government of the United States does not pay tribute to any buccaneer; if our national conscience demands that these prisoners be released, there is only one way to do it—and the right way does not include buying off a tyrant and by so doing further strengthening his position.

To the bulldozers-for-Castro deal, conscience said "No."

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of its parts, the answer must be the same, with emphasis and finality.